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III.—LAUREL IN ANCIENT RELIGION AND FOLK-LORE.

Although authorities may differ in their definition of folk-lore, certainly it cannot be denied that those substances which are intimately associated with the life of the folk of Greece and Italy, are inseparably connected with rites and beliefs that can be shown to be survivals from an earlier stratum of folk-religion. This fact is, I am convinced, of the utmost importance in explaining many of the superstitious ideas and practices connected with various plants, and the object of this paper is to consider laurel,—*δάφνη*, *laurus*,—from this point of view, to see whether any explanation can thus be gained of the part played by this tree in ancient religion and folk-lore.

It is generally agreed that the rites of purification which form such a prominent aspect of Greek and Roman religion, go back to a primitive period when a belief in spirits was general, for the purification was not what we understand by the term, it was not spiritual; the stain was not within but came from without and was caused by souls of the dead, which had unlimited power for harm. Against these spirits man had to be continuously on his guard; he must protect himself, his house, his flocks from their attacks; and every purificatory rite had originally, at least, this end in view: to placate these spirits and to prevent them from doing harm.

In such rites we find laurel playing an important rôle. That it had done so from the most primitive times, the mythological instances of its use show. We are told, in the first place, that Apollo, after he had slain the Python, purified himself with laurel,¹ and every eighth year at Delphi, in the festival known as τὸ Σεπτήριον,² this purification of the god was represented. As Frazer remarks in his note on Paus., l. 1.: "This legend of the

¹ Cf. Ael. V. H. 3, 1; Plut. Quaes. Gr. 12; de defect. or. 15; Tert. de cor. mil. 7.

² Cf. Plut., l. 1.; Paus. 2, 7, 7 with Frazer's note; Harrison, Prol. to the Study of Gr. Rel., pp. 113 sq. Cf., too, the Daphnephoria at Thebes; Phot. Bibl., p. 321; Paus. 9, 10, 4. Cf. Boetticher, Baumk. 385 sq.; Gruppe, Gr. My. 106.

purification of Apollo for killing the dragon seems to carry us back to the days of primitive Greek savagery", to a time when the act of killing an animal was murder, and the avenging soul of the murdered animal was as much feared as the avenging soul of a murdered man.¹ The explanation of the use of the laurel, therefore, lies in the fact that it was thought to protect the slayer against such evil spirits whether they were those of beasts or men.

An example of its use against the latter is afforded by the tradition of the purification of Orestes for the murder of his mother. That laurel was used in the rites practised on that occasion is shown by the fact that when other things which were employed were buried a laurel tree sprang from them.² On three vases, too, depicting this ceremony, laurel branches are pictured.³ In two of them Apollo, who performs the ceremony, holds a branch of laurel on his left arm; in the third he has a bowl in his left hand, "while in his right he holds a branch of laurel over Orestes' head, sprinkling him with the liquid contained in the bowl". A somewhat similar scene, in which the laurel again appears, is painted on an amphora of lower Italy; this has been interpreted as the purification of Leonymus in the White Isle.⁴ On a cameo, also, representing the purification of the daughters of Proteus by Melampus, a branch is pictured which may be laurel.⁵ Such examples help us to explain, I think, the statement of Dion. Hal. A. R. 1, 40, that after Hercules had slain Cacus, the native inhabitants crowned him and themselves with laurel. It was an act of purification, and its aim was that of all such acts,—to keep the evil spirits at a distance; so the Argonauts, after the slaying of Amycus, crowned themselves with laurel; Ap. Rh. 2, 159, and Clem. Alex. Protr. 1, advises the true disciple to take to himself means of purification worthy of God, not leaves of laurel and fillets interwoven with wool and purple.

¹ Frazer, l. 1., gives many examples of similar ideas among savage peoples. There are other traces, too, of the time when they prevailed in Greece; cf. the ritual of the Bouphonia, on which see Harrison, l. 1., p. 111, with ref. in note 1.

² Paus. 2, 31, 8, with Frazer's note.

³ Frazer, l. 1. One, an Apulian vase, is given in Baum. Denkm., p. 1117; for the others, cf. Ann. d. Inst. 1847, pl. X; Arch. Zeit. 1860, pl. CXXXVII; Compté Rendu (St. Petersburg), 1863, p. 213.

⁴ Arch. Zeit. N. F. 1 (1847), pp. 97-107; Paus. 3, 19, 12 with Frazer's note.

⁵ Baum. Denkm. fig. 988; Frazer on Paus. 2, 31, 8.

Throughout Greek and Roman literature references to the purificatory uses of laurel are common. That it was so used is stated by Fest., p. 117, Pl. 15, 135 sq.; Serv. on Aen. 1, 329; Corn. 32; Lyd. de Men. 4, 4; Geop. 11, 2, 4 sq.; cf. Ins. fr. Perg. 264, 4, *περικαθαίρειν θείῳ καὶ δάφνῃ*.¹ Wherever there was danger from unclean spirits, wherever ceremonial purity was required, there we find laurel employed. In the prologos of Eur. Ion, 76 sq. Ion enters bearing a laurel branch to cleanse the approaches to the temple of Apollo, and in vs. 102 sq. we see him at his work, sprinkling the holy floor with laurel branches dipped in water,—cf. the painting referred to above,—and sweeping it with a broom made of laurel (114). Hence, as he who entered a temple of Apollo had to be pure (Serv. on Aen., l. l.), he carried laurel branches (Eur. Ion 420 sq.), or wore a laurel crown; Livy 23, 11, 5 in describing the mission of Fabius Pictor to Delphi says: *iussumque a templi antistite, sicut coronatus laurea corona et oraculum adisset et rem divinam fecisset, ita coronatum navem ascendere nec ante deponere eam quam Romam pervenisset, se... coronam Romae in ara Apollinis deposuisse*; cf. Plut. Arist. 20, 5. To wear this crown on the return from the oracle seemingly signified good news; cf. Soph. Oed. Tyr. 82; Eur. Hipp. 806. The symbolism which grew up around the connection of the laurel with Apollo has, of course, often obscured the original idea underlying its use, but there can be little doubt in most cases what this original idea was. Further examples will help to make this clear.

In the Schol. to Eur. Alc. 98 we read: *ὅποτε τις ἀποθάνοι πρὸ τῶν πυλῶν ὄστρακα πληροῦντες ὕδατος ἐτίθεισαν καὶ κλάδους δάφνης ἵνα οἱ ἐξιόντες περιρραίνοντο*. The reason for purification in such a case is well known.² So Servius commenting on Verg. Aen. 6, 230, where in the lustral rites in connection with the burial of Misenus, an olive branch is used to sprinkle holy water on those present, says: *moris fuerat ut de lauro fieret*. The end to be gained by such sprinkling is well shown by Juv. 2, 157, where, in describing the underworld, he apostrophizes the souls of the great dead and asks them what they would do when an unbelieving shade came among them: *cuperent lustrari si qua darentur/Sulphura cum taedis et si foret humida laurus*. The same means of purification were practised at the Roman Parilia,—Ov. F. 4, 727,—an ancient

¹ Cf. Babick, de Daesidaemonia Veterum Quaes. p. 5.

² Cf. Rohde, Psyche² 1, 217 sq.

festival having for aim the promotion of fertility, and protection for man and his possessions against the spirits of ill;¹ laurel was also burned at this time, *Ov.*, l. 1., 742. On May 15, also, the Roman merchant sprinkled himself and his wares in the same way:² *Ov. Fast.* 5, 679, *Spargit et ipse suos lauro rorante capillos/Et peragit solita fallere voce preces:/Ablue praeteriti perjuria temporis, inquit/Ablue praeterita perfida verba die!*

In times of pestilence and disease, which primitive man ascribes to the presence of evil spirits,—cf. *Ov. Fast.* 2, 533 sq.,—we find laurel again employed to banish the ill. We are told, for example, by *Clem. Alex. Strom.* 5, 8, 49, that Branchus, the mythical founder of the oracle at Miletus, during a pestilence there, sprinkled the people with laurel branches and purified them. In the lustral rites ordered by the Sibyl on such occasions, laurel was especially prominent;³ cf. *Livy* 40, 37: *decemviri supplicationem in biduum valetudinis causa . . . edixerunt. Maiores duodecim annis omnes coronati et lauream in manu tenentes supplicaverunt.* So on the occurrence of prodigies laurel crowns were worn and laurel branches carried in the various processions in honor of Apollo: *Livy* 27, 37, 11; 34, 55, 4; 36, 37, 5; 43, 13, 8; *Isyllos B 10* (Wilamowitz, *Isyl.* p. 9). Laurel was also used in the lustration of armies; cf. *Jul. Obs.* 130 *lustratione lictor perversis fascibus lauream imposuit.* Three other passages, *Dion Cass.* 47, 40; *App. Civ. B.* 4, p. 668; *Plut. Brut.* 39, 2, do not mention laurel in connection with this rite, but speak of crowning only. As they refer, however, to the crowning of the reversed fasces,—a bad omen, (*Jul. Obs.* 130),—laurel must be meant. *Plut. Marc.* 22, 1, is more explicit: in speaking of the triumph he says that arms and men are crowned with much laurel just as is customary in the purification of armies; and in the next section he says that when Marcellus, after a victory, was about to burn spoils as a sacrifice to the gods, the army stood by crowned, i. e., with laurel; cf. *ib. Sulla* 27, 4.

All these citations furnish us examples of what are generally styled purificatory rites, but we must not forget that purification originally meant nothing but freedom from spirits, and the substances used in such rites had power not only to expel these spirits

¹ Cf. Preller-Jordan, *Römische Mythologie*, 1, 416 sq. Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 79 sq.

² Cf. *Prel.-Jor.*, l. 1., 2, 232.

³ Cf. Diels, *Sibyll. Blätt.*, pp. 51; 120.

but to repel them ;¹ i. e., they were prophylactic, and it is impossible to tell which idea was the most prominent. In endeavoring to explain, for instance, the custom of the triumphator wearing a laurel crown, Pl. 15, 38, 135, after speaking of the virtues of laurel, continues: *ob has causas equidem crediderim, honorem ei habitum in triumphis potius quam quia suffimentum sit caedis hostium et purgatio, ut tradit Masurius*. The latter is the reason² given by Fest. also, 117, 13: *laureati milites sequebantur currum triumphantis ut quasi purgati a caede humana intrarent urbem*. This is near the mark, but what was the necessity of the purple robe,³ the phallus, the ribald cries of the soldiers, which were as characteristic of the triumph as the laurel crowns?⁴ They were all prophylactic, potent against evil spirits, and Pliny, 28, 39, tells us that the purpose of the phallus and the soldiers' jokes was to protect the triumphator against envy and the evil eye.⁵ This furnishes us the key: there

¹ Cf. Porphyry, *de philos. ex orac. haur.*, p. 149: *διὰ τοῦτο αἱ ἀγνεῖαι, οὐ διὰ τοὺς θεοὺς προηγούμενως, ἀλλ' ἢ οὗτοι (= spirits) ἀποστῶσι*.

² Serv. on Verg. *Ecl.* 8, 12 (cf. *Isid.* 17, 7), *est ratio quoniam . . semper vireat*. Fest., l. 1, adds: "*vel quod medicamento siccissima sit: vel quod omni tempore viret*."

³ The choice of the purple garment cannot, it seems to me, be due to mere caprice of taste. Purple was closely associated with the spirit world: it was the color worn by those who sacrificed to the Eumenides, *Aesch. Eum.* 1028; in the annual sacrifice to those who had been slain at the battle of Plataea, the archon, who could at no other time touch iron or wear purple, put on a robe of this color and carried a sword, *Plut. Arist.* 21; cf. *ib. Arat.* 53, 4-5; the dead were buried in purple, *Stat. S.* 5, 1, 225; the *Salii* were clad in purple on the March festival, *Plut. Num.* 13, 4; *Dion. Hal.* 2, 70; cf. *ib.* 7, 72; more significant still is the statement of *Plut. Rom.* 25, 5, who, in describing the triumph of Romulus, adds that whenever they offer a sacrifice for victory, they lead through the forum an old man clad in a boy's robe edged with purple, with a bulla around his neck; cf. further, *Diels, Sib. Blät.*, p. 69 n. Rohde, *Psy.* 1, 226, n. 3; Gruppe, *Gr. My.* 891, n. 3.

⁴ For the details of a triumph, cf. *Prel.-Jor.* 1, 230; *Marq.-Momm. Privatl.* 542; *Staatsv.* 2, 582 sq. 576; for the purple robe, cf. *Pl.* 9, 127; *Plut. Rom.* 25, 5; *Aem. Pau.* 34, 3; *Dion. Hal.* 3, 62; 7, 72; for the soldiers' jests, cf. *Pl.* 28, 39; *Ov. Trist.* 4, 2, 51; *Mart.* 7, 8, 8; *Claud. de Con. Stil.* 3, 20-21; other ref. in *Marq.-Momm. Staatsv.* 2, 588, n. 2.

⁵ Cf. *Prel.-Jor.* 1, 230, n. 4; according to *Macr. S.* 1, 6, 9, a bulla was also carried by the triumphator: *nam sicut praetexta magistratuum, ita bulla gestamen erat triumphantium, quam in triumpho prae se gerebant inclusis intra eam remediis quae crederent adversus invidiam valentissima*. The same ideas must have prompted the use of the iron ring (*Pl.* 33, 11), and the custom of painting the body (*ib.* 33, 111).

were spirits abroad and it was for protection against them that these precautions were taken. The fact that the soldiers also wore laurel¹ suggests that the spirits most feared were the avenging ghosts of the warriors slain in battle. That something was to be feared from these spirits the necessity for the purification of an army shows, and this view is supported by the distinction made between an ovatio and a triumph. The former, in which there was no chariot, no phallus, no purple robe, and a myrtle instead of a laurel crown, was granted to a general who had gained his point without bloodshed, the latter to one who had subdued his enemies by fighting and the shedding of blood; cf. Plut. Marc. 22, 1; Pl. 15, 135; Gell. 5, 6, 21; cf., too, the custom mentioned by Plut. Rom. 25, 5, referred to above,—a custom which shows that something more beside the evil eye was feared.

Laurel apparently has lustral signification in its use by the Romans for presents (strenae),² on the first of January. On this day, according to Lydus, de mens. 4, 4 φύλλα δὲ δάφνης ἐδίδουσαν ἄπερ ἐκάλουν στρήνα, εἰς τιμὴν δαίμονός τινος οὕτω προσαγορευομένης ἥτις ἔφορός ἐστι τῶν νικῶν. Somewhat different is Geop. 11, 2, 6: δάφνη . . . ὑγείας ἐστὶν ἐργαστική. ὅθεν καὶ φύλλα αὐτῆς ἐπιδίδονται τοῖς ἄρχουσι παρὰ τοῦ δήμου τῇ πρώτῃ τοῦ Ἰαννουαρίου μηνός (cf. Mart. 10, 10, 1), καὶ ἰσχάδες, and Fest., p. 113, 28, tells us that these presents were made omnis boni causa; so Ov. Fast. 1, 185 sq. explains the custom of giving similar gifts,—sweet cakes, figs, etc. The custom must have been much older than 152 B. C., when the consuls first began their official year on January 1, for the strenae were brought into connection with the goddess Strenia, and from

¹ It is unnecessary to give all the references to laurel in this connection; the triumphator wore a laurel crown: Tib. 2, 5, 5; Ov. Am. 2, 12, 1; Ep. ex Pon. 2, 2, 82 sq. Tr. 4, 2, 51; Pl. 15, 137; Livy 10, 7, 9; Mart. 8, 65, 5; Serv. Aen. 1, 394; Ecl. 8, 12; Claud. Gigant. 34; he carried a branch in his hand: Tib. 2, 5, 117; 1, 7, 7; Pl., l. l.; Plut. Aem. Paul. 34; the fasces were crowned with it: Tac. A. 13, 9, 7; Cic. de Div. 1, 59; Jul. Obs. 123; Claud. Quart. Con. Hon. 14; the chariot, Suet. Aug. 94; Claud. Tert. Con. Hon. 128; de Bell. Gild. 1, 13; the horses, Ov. ex Pon. 2, 1, 58; Flor. 1, 5, 6; Mart. 7, 8, 8; Zon. 7, 8; the soldiers bore laurel, Pl. 15, 133; Livy 45, 38, 12; Fest. 117, 13; Mart. 7, 5, 4; Plut. Aem. Pau. 34, 3-4; App. Pun. 66; the laurel of the fasces and that which the triumphator had carried in his hand was laid in the temple of Juppiter, Sen. Dial. 12, 10, 8; Stat. S. 4, 1, 41; Sil. Ital. 15, 118; Suet. Dom. 6; Nero. 14; Jul. Obs. l. l.; Dio Cass. 54, 25; 55, 5; Ov. Tr. 4, 2, 51 sq.

² A full account of the strenae is given by Lipenius in Graevius, Thesaurus, Vol. 12, p. 409; cf., also, Prel.-Jor. 1, 180; Marq.-Momm. Privat. 251-2; Staatsv. 3, 266, n. 8; Samter, Familienfeste d. Gr. u. Röm. 87 sq.

the time of T. Tatius, we are told, twigs of a felix arbor were taken from her grove at the beginning of each year and carried to the Arx, Symm. ep. 10, 35. Unfortunately we know little about Strenia,¹ and the knowledge does not help us to disentangle what was original from the later symbolism on which, as the examples quoted show, reasons for the custom were based. If we could be sure that there was a change of date and that March 1, the ancient New Year's, was the day with which the practice was originally connected, we could be more positive as to the significance of the laurel.

For there can be no doubt that the custom of decorating the Regia, the Curiae, and the houses of the flamens with fresh laurel on this great Mars' festival² (cf. Ov. F. 3, 135 sq.; Macr. S. 1, 12, 6) had its origin in the belief that laurel could aid in keeping off evil spirits. This was the purpose of all the rites practised on that day, as it was the purpose of similar rites practised elsewhere at the beginning of spring.³ During the Greek Anthesteria for example, on the Choes when the spirits of the dead were thought to rise again,⁴ the doors were smeared with pitch and people chewed buckthorn from early morning; it is probable that this was the day on which the Superstitious Man put laurel in his mouth and walked around thus the whole day, Theophr. Ch. 16. Pitch and buckthorn were frequently used whenever there was danger from spirits,⁵ and laurel must be classed with them; the sick Bion, for instance, hung buckthorn and a laurel branch over his door: Diog. Laert. de vit. phil. 4, 57; cf. the epigram cited by Hesych. de hom. s. v. Βίων (p. 14, Orelli).

We are expressly told, indeed, that where laurel is there the spirits cannot be: Geop. 11, 2, 5: ἀπεχθάνεται δαίμοσι καὶ ἔνθα ἂν ᾗ δάφνη ἐκποδὼν δαίμονες; so Lydus, de Mens. 4, 4. Hence it was a sure protection against the evil eye and enchantment: Zenob. 3, 12 (= Diog. 4, 14): Δαφνίνην φορῶ βακτηρίαν. τοῦτο λέγειν εἰώθασιν οἱ ὑπὸ τινων ἐπιβουλευόμενοι· παρόσον ἀλεξιφάρμακον ἡ δάφνη; cf. Diog. 4, 78; B. 322; and it is this power over spirits which explains many of the uses to which laurel was put. The same reason which inspired Bion to hang it over his door in time of sickness,

¹ Cf. Wissowa, Relig. d. Röm., p. 196 sq., Prel.-Jor. 2, 234.

² Cf. Roscher, Lex. s. v. Mars, 2428; Fowler, pp. 39 sq.

³ Cf. Fowler, l. l.; for the Anthesteria, cf. Harrison, pp. 32 sq.

⁴ Phot. s. v. μαρὰ ἡμέρα; Rohde, Psy. 1, 237 sq., Harrison, l. l.

⁵ Rohde, l. l., n. 3; Gruppe, Gr. Myth. 889, n. 4.

when we know that spirits were thought to be active, caused people to place laurel branches there at other times; cf. E. M. s. v. *Ἀντήνους*, *τοὺς τῆς δάφνης ἔρπηκας τοὺς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἱσταμένους*; Hesych. s. v. *Κάμυθα*, especially on occasions when spirits were most liable to do harm. Thus it was the custom to decorate the door in this manner at weddings; Juv. 6, 79: *ornentur postes et grandi ianua lauro*, on which the Schol. rem: *ad honorem nuptiarum*. Sic enim solent in nuptiis praeparare. Laurel is expressly mentioned in this connection by Claud. de Rap. Pros. 3, 74 sq.; Epithal. de Nup. Hon. 299, where the soldiers at the wedding are crowned with it; Apul. Met. 4, 26; Tertul. ad Ux. 2, 6; Dracont. Med. 336: of the wedding of Jason and Medea, *tunc regia lauro/cingitur et postes soceri pia sarta coronant*; E. M., p. 531, 53. In a picture on a hydria, also, evidently representing the preparations for a bridal bath, one of the girls holds branches of laurel and myrtle.¹ In Juv. 6, 226, Luc. Phar. 2, 354, Stat. Theb. 2, 248,—passages referring to weddings,—the rami and sarta were evidently of laurel; cf. Tert. de cor. mil. 13. This was, perhaps, the custom also at births; cf. Juv. 9, 85: *foribus suspende coronas/iam pater es*, where laurel² is probably meant; all sorts of precautions were taken at such a time *εἰς ἀπέλασιν δαιμόνων*, Phot. s. v. *ράμνος*. In Greece, when a boy or girl reached the age of puberty, laurel was hung before the door, E. M., p. 531, 53; and it was this belief in its power to keep off the spirits that led to the custom of planting laurel trees in front of houses; Pl. 15, 127: *laurus . . . gratissima domibus, ianitrix Caesarum Pontificarumque; sola et domus exornat et ante limina excubat*; cf. Sen. Dial. 11, 16, 5; to the 'ianitrix Caesarum' refer Ov. Tr. 3, 1, 43; M. 1, 562; Dio Cass. 53, 16; Tert. Apol. 35; cf. also Sidon. Ap. 2, 18. For the same reason laurel crowns were chiselled on the walls;³ they are often represented, too, on tombstones.⁴

¹ Cf. Gerhard, Auserles. Gr. Vasenb. 3, 306; cf. further, Sen. Ag. 313; Stat. Silv. 1, 2, 181.

² The crowns may have been of olive as was the custom in Greece; cf. Hesych. s. v. *στέφανον ἐκφέρειν*; Rohde, Psy. 2, 72, n. 1; Gruppe, l. l., 879 sq.; Samter, l. l., 80 sq. It may be noted that in Germany, every time a child is swathed, a cross is made with the laurel branches which hang on the bed; cf. Wuttke Deutsch. Volksaberg. 588; cf., further, Boettich. Baumk., p. 373.

³ Cf. Heim, Fl. Jb. Kl. Phil. Supp. 19, 1893, p. 508.

⁴ Cf. C. I. L. 3, 120; 6, 77; 2278; Kaibel, I. G. S. I. 1834; cf. Heim, l. l.

These uses gave rise to the custom of wearing laurel crowns or decorating with laurel on all festive occasions; cf. Cic. pro Mur. 88: ut eam imaginem clarissimi viri parentis sui quam paucis ante diebus laureatam in sua gratulatione conspexit, eandem deformatam . . . videat; Ov. Tr. 3, 1, 43, says of it, facit omnia festa; cf. Juv. 10, 65, pone domi laurus; 12, 91, on the safe return of a friend; Plut. Aem. Pau. 22, 1; Tac. Ann. 15, 71; Tert. inveighs against the custom as the distinguishing mark of a pagan: de Idol. 15; de Cor. mil. 13; Ap. 35; and it was forbidden by canon law: Cor. iur. can. decr. 2, 26, 7, 13: non licet iniquas observationes agere kalendarum et otii vacare gentilibus, neque lauro aut viriditate arborum cingere domus; omnis enim haec observatio paganismi est. In all the celebrations connected with the emperors laurel is especially prominent; people carried it on their coronation; cf. Herodian 2, 2; 2, 13-14; on their birthdays: Dio Cass. 47, 18; 72, 21; on their triumphal entries into cities, Tac. H. 2, 70; Suet. Aug. 58; Dio Cass. 74, 1; Herodian 1, 7; 3, 8; 4, 1; 8, 6; 8, 7; and at other times: Tac. H. 2, 55: ut cessisse Othonem . . . certi auctores . . . attulerunt, . . . populus cum lauro ac floribus Galbae imagines circum templa tulit; Dio Cass. 63, 4.¹

The following examples will illustrate further its supposed apotropaic power: Ael. N. A. 1, 35, tells us that doves put laurel twigs in their nests *βασκανίας ἀμυντήριον*; cf. Pl. 8, 101: palumbes graculi merulae perdices lauri folio annum fastidium purgant. According to Geop. 2, 30, 1, leaves of laurel put among barley grains preserve them. It was apotropaic against the robigo: Pl. 18, 161, robigo quidem maxima segetum pestis, lauri ramis in arvo defixis, transit in ea folia ex arvis; so Geop. 5, 33, 4. It was put in the nest of a sitting hen adversus tonitrua quibus vitiantur ova pullique semiformes interimuntur, Colum. 8, 5, 12; cf. Geop. 14, 11, 5; in the latter we also read that it protected the wine

¹ For the custom of crowning the fasces with laurel,—a custom evidently based upon symbolism and hence needing not to be considered here, cf. Marq.-Momm. Staatsr. 1, 374. The same is true of the laureatae litterae and laureati pili which were signs of victory. Ref. are numerous: cf. Plut. Rom. 41, 3; Cic. in Pis. 17, 39; Ov. Am. 1, 11, 25; Livy, 5, 28, 13; 45, 1, 7-8; Pl. 15, 133; 35, 201; Pers. 6, 43; Pl. Pan. 8; Mart. 7, 5, 4; 6, 5; 9, 35, 6; Tac. Ag. 18; H. 3, 77; Schol. Juv. 4, 149; Flor. 3, 3, 20; Vita Max. 24; Alex. Serv. 58; Herodian 8, 6; Dio Cass. 62, 19; App. in Mith., p. 223; Amm. Marc. 16, 12, 69. On the laurel crown of the emperors, granted first to Caesar,—Dio Cass. 43, 43—cf. Marq.-Momm. Staatsr. 1, pp. 427 sq.; cf. p. 414.

jars from lightning: 7, 11, ἔνιοι δὲ δάφνης κλάδους ἐπιτιθέασι κατὰ ἀντιπάθειαν; in the cod. Paris. suppl. Gr. 636 (ed. Fuchs, Rh. Mus. 50, 1895), pp. 576 sq., we read under the caption περὶ κεραυνῶν,—τὰ μὲν οὖν φυλάσσοντα ἀπὸ κεραυνῶν εἰσι ταῦτα,—ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς γῆς δάφνη καὶ συκῇ.

These ideas are due to a belief that lightning never struck the laurel tree, hence Tiberius turbatiore caelo numquam non coronam lauream capite gestavit, quod fulmine afflari negetur id genus frondis, Suet. Tib. 69; cf. Pl. 15, 135; in 134, the latter remarks manu satarum receptarumque in domos fulmine sola non icitur; cf. ib. 2, 146; Serv. on Aen. 1, 394; Isid. Or. 17, 7, 2. We are able to appreciate the reasoning which led to this belief, for laurel was thought to be full of fire;¹ i. e., a fiery demon was originally supposed to dwell in it, and it was imagined that the heavenly fire demon would not harm the related demon dwelling in the tree.² And this belief in turn had its origin, I think, in the use of laurel to strike fire; cf. Pl. 16, 208: nihil hedera praestantius quae teratur, lauro quae terat;³ cf. Sen. N. Q. 2, 22, 1,—a use referred to in Hym. Herm. 108: δάφνης ἀγλαὸν ὄζον ἐλὼν ἐπέλεψε σιδήρω/ ἄρμενον ἐν παλάμῃς ἄμπνυτο δὲ θερμὸς αὐτῇ. The practice must go back to the most primitive times.

It is probably due to the common use of laurel for firewood, that its crackling⁴ in the flames was thought to be a good omen; Tib. 2, 5, 81: et succensa sacris crepitet bene laurea flammis/omine quo felix et sacer annus erit. As the crackling, however, is simply an indication that the fire had caught, perhaps the omen in the first place depended upon whether the fire burned or went out. This is to be inferred from Theocr. 2, 23 sq., where laurel is burned in a love⁵ charm: Δέλφεις ἔμ' ἀνίασεν· ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ Δέλφιδι δάφναν/αἶθω· χ' ὥς αὐτὰ λακεῖ μέγα καπνυρίσσα/κήξαπίνας ἄφθη, κούδὲ σποδὸν εἶδομες αὐτὰς/οὔτω τοι καὶ Δέλφεις ἐνὶ φλογὶ σάρκ' ἀμαθύνοι: the

¹ Pl. 16, 207 calls it calida; cf. Theoph. h. pl. 5, 4; Euseb. Praep. Evan. 3, p. 112; Geop. 11, 2; Lyd. de men. 4, 4.

² Cf. Gruppe, p. 785. He compares the Blitzstein; Grimm, D. M.³ 1, 164; 2, 1170 sq.

³ Gr. τρύπανον, Theoph. h. pl. 5, 9, 7.

⁴ This peculiarity is often referred to: Lucr. 6, 151; Ov. F. 1, 343; Pl. 15, 135; E. M. s. v. δάφνη, p. 250, 35; Eust. on Hom. Il. 1, 14; hence the proverb, μεῖζονα βοῇ δάφνης χλωρᾶς καιομένης, Diog. 6, 52; Suid. s. v.

⁵ The fact that laurel burned quickly and completely would account for its use in such a charm; cf. Kuhnert, Feuerzauber, Rh. Mus. 49 (1894), p. 44; its magic properties, too, lend an additional motive.

good omen consists in the fact that the laurel was entirely consumed and left no ashes; in the same charm as given by Verg. E. 8, 106-7, the flame, after dying down suddenly brightens again: *corripuit altaria flammis/sponte sua dum ferre moror cinis ipse. bonum sit!* We see from Prop. 2, 28, 35-6, that the reverse is a bad omen; he performs a charm during Cynthia's illness: *deficiunt magico torti sub carmine rhombi/et iacet exstincto laurus adusta foco.* This use of laurel in a medicinal charm has its ultimate explanation in its power to drive away spirits; cf. the custom of the philosopher Bion, referred to above, p. 293; and its use in purificatory rites in time of pestilence, p. 290. This is the significance, too, of the fire made of laurel and herba Sabina on the Roman Parilia, Ov. F. 4, 741: *ure mares oleas taedamque herbasque Sabinas/et crepet in mediis laurus adusta foci.*¹

Such practices, which carry us back at once into the heart of ancient folk-lore and religion, make us wonder why Pl. 15, 135 should say: *adeoque in profanis usibus pollui laurum et oleam fas non est, ut ne propitiandis quidem numinibus accendi ex his altaria arave debeant.* Certainly the uses set forth above were 'profani' and 'altaria' occur in the charm quoted from Verg. Can the explanation of Pliny's words lie in a belief that laurel was not pure enough, i. e., was felt to be too closely associated with the spirit world, for the sacrificial fire in honor of the gods of the upper world?² We know that this had to be free from all associations with spirits, or it might be polluted by their presence,³ and we have seen how closely laurel was connected with them. There is, too, other evidence which supports this explanation. Iambl. Vit. Pyth. 154 preserves the following injunction of Pythagoras: *κέδρω καὶ δάφνη καὶ κυπαρίττω καὶ δρυὶ καὶ μυρὶνῇ τοὺς θεοὺς τιμᾶν καὶ μηδὲν τούτοις ἀποκαθαίρεσθαι τοῦ σώματος, μηδὲ σχίζειν τοὺς ὀδόντας.* Surely the latter commands must rest upon the fear that spirits

¹ According to Lyd. de Men. 4, 4: *κάν ταῖς μαντείαις καίοντες ταύτην οἱ ἄνθρωποι παράστασιν προφητείας δοκοῦσιν εὐρηκέναι.* cf. Boissonade, Anecd. Gr. 1, p. 425.

² Cf. Serv. ad. Ecl. 5, 66: Varro diis superis altaria, terrestribus aras, inferis focos dicari affirmat. The distinction does not always hold good,—cf. Marq.-Momm. Staatsv. 3, 161,—but it is noteworthy that Pl. omits 'foci', while in the passages quoted above, the laurel is burned in 'foci.'

³ *ὅπως μὴ προσάψαιτο τοῦ βωμοῦ διὰ τὸ μυρίας ἰσως ἀναμεμῖχθαι κήρας,* Philo Jud. de Vit. Mos. 3, 18 (Cohn-Wendland). On the necessity of 'pure' fire, cf. Rohde Psy. 2, 73, and n. 4.

would settle upon your body and get inside if you were not careful what you put into your mouth.¹ This would explain, too, the advice of Empedocles² to abstain entirely from laurel leaves.

When we endeavor to account for the belief that spirits resided in the laurel and the other trees mentioned by Pythagoras, we are aided in our quest by a saying of Empedocles, recorded by Ael. N. An. 12, 7, that if man, after death, is to be changed into a plant laurel is the most preferable.³ Nor are we lacking for proof that souls of the dead were thought to take up their abode in this tree.⁴ We are told that a laurel tree grew on the grave of the 'earth-born Ischenus', better known as Taraxippus;⁵ and on that of Amycus, Pl. 16, 239: *in eodem tractu portus Amyci est Bebyrce rege interfecto clarus. Eius tumulus a supremo die lauro tegitur quam insanam*⁶ *vocant, quoniam si quid ex ea decerptum inferatur navibus, iurgia fiant donec abiciatur*; the latter detail is also mentioned by the Schol. on Ap. Rh. 2, 159, and means simply that the power of Amycus still lived on in the tree into which his spirit had passed.⁷

¹ Cf. Porphy. ap. Euseb. Praep. Ev. 4, 23, 3: *καὶ γὰρ μάλιστα ταῖς ποιαῖς τροφαῖς χαίρουσι, σιτουμένων γὰρ ἡμῶν προσίασι καὶ προσίζάνουσι τῷ σώματι . . . μάλιστα δ' αἵματι χαίρουσι καὶ ταῖς ἀκαθαρσίαις καὶ ἀπολαμβάνουσι τούτων, εἰσδύνοντες τοῖς χρωμένοις*; cf. Harrison, p. 167.

² Plut. Symp. 3, 1, 2—cf. ib. plac. phil. 5, 26—*οὐ μόνης . . . κατ' Ἐμπεδοκλέα τῆς δάφνης τῶν φύλλων ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἔχεσθαι χρὴ ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων φεῖδεσθαι δένδρων ἀπάντων*; cf. for a different view, Rohde, I. 1, 2, 181, n. 2.

³ *ἐν θήρεσσι λέοντες ὀρειλεχέες χαμαιεῦναι γίνονται, δάφναι δ' ἐνὶ δένδρεσιν ἡνκόμοισιν*. Empedocles wore a laurel crown on his journey, Suid. s. v.

⁴ And the others mentioned: e. g., a myrtle grew on the grave of Polydorus, Verg. A. 3, 23 sq.; cypresses on that of the seer Alcmaeon, Paus. 8, 24, 7; note that the daughters of Eteocles, after their death, were turned into cypresses, Geop. 11, 4; cf. Theocr. 16, 104; a nymph lay under the oak which Erysichthon felled, Ov. M. 8, 771; cf., too, Paus. 10, 32, 9; for the *κέδρος* we have no such definite information but it may be noted that Paus. 8, 17, 2 places this tree, the oak, and cypress among the woods out of which images of the gods were first made; this indicates an earlier belief that a numen dwelt in these trees. We may compare the statement of Stat. Th. 4, 275 that the Arcades were born from laurel trees. I have found no other reference to laurel in this connection; the oak is generally mentioned; cf. Verg. Aen. 8, 315; Juv. 6, 12; cf. Hom. Od. 19, 163.

⁵ Tzetzes on Lycoph. Cass. 42; cf. Frazer, n. to Paus. 6, 20, 15.

⁶ Cf. Hehn, Kulturpfl. u. Haust. 198.

⁷ For examples of this belief, cf. Gruppe, p. 790, n. 1; Tylor, Prim. Cult. 2, 215 sq.

Instructive in this connection is the belief of the Romans that the laurel was the fatal tree¹ of the Julian house; Pl. 15, 136: *Liviae Drusillae, . . . cum pacta esset illa Caesari, gallinam conspicui candoris sedenti aquila ex alto abiecit in gremium illaesam, intrepideque miranti accessit miraculum, quoniam teneret rostro laureum ramum onustum suis bacis. . . iussere haruspices rammumque eum seri ac rite custodiri. Quod factum est in villa Caesarum. . . . Ex ea triumphans postea Caesar laurum in manu tenuit, coronamque capite gessit ac deinde imperatores Caesares cuncti. Traditusque mos est ramos quos tenuerunt serendi, et durant silvae nominibus suis discretæ; cf. Dio Cass. 48, 52; Suet. Gal. 1. Serv. ad Aen. 6, 230, adds the important detail: nata erat laurus in Palatio eo die quo Augustus; cf. Suet., l. 1., for the corollary: observatum est sub cuiusque—sc. Caesaris—obitum arborem ab ipso institutam elanguisse. Ergo novissimo Neronis anno et silva omnis exaruit radicitus; cf. Dio, 63, 29; Xiph. 63, p. 727, E; so among the signs foretelling the death of Alex. Severus, laurus . . . ingens et antiqua tota subito decidit Vit. Alex. Sev. 60. In the following examples the use of laurel as symbolical of victory² seems to have had influence: according to Dio, 41, 39, Caesar's success was foreshadowed by the fact that when he was sacrificing preparatory to setting out from Brundisium against Pompey, a kite, flying over the Forum, dropped a laurel branch upon one of those who was assisting him; the birth of Severus was attended by the following miracle: Vit. 13, nata in domo laurus iuxta persici arborem intra unum annum persici arborem vicit. Cf. the dream of Vergil's mother, Donatus vita, p. 55. It was, on the contrary, an omen of Caesar's death when, on the day before the fatal Ides, avem regaliolum cum laureo ramulo Pompeianae curiae se inferentem, volucres varii generis ex proximo nemore persecutæ ibidem discerpserunt, Suet. Jul. 81; and of the overthrow of Vitellius, when laurea—sc. corona,—quam religiosissime circumdederat, in profluentem excidit, Suet. Vitel. 9. We read of similar omens in the case of*

¹ Cf. Dieterich, *Abraxas*, p. 98, n. 2; Gruppe, p. 879.

² *Laurus*, *laurea*, etc. often = victory: cf. *Ov. ex Pont.* 2, 7, 67: *praestat et exulibus pacem tua laurea, Caesar*; *ib. Tr.* 2, 172; *Mart.* 8, 50, 5; *Luc. Ph.* 1, 122; *Claud. in Eutr.* 1, 503; cf. also, *Plaut. Cist.* 201; *Pl.* 15, 133; *Zenob.* 5, 34; *Stat. Th.* 12, 492. As an emblem of peace, it seems to have adorned the temple of Janus; cf. *Auson. Caes. temp. imp. XII, Caes. vs. 11*, *ter dominante Tito cingit nova laurea Ianum*.

others besides the Emperors; Plut. Sul. 27, 4 tells us that Sulla's success was foretold by the figure of a laurel crown on the liver of the sacrificial victim. According to Flor. 2, 7, 7, *manifestam victoriam nata in praetoria puppe laurus*; cf. Livy 32, 1, 12, *litterae adlatae in quibus . . . scriptum erat lauream in puppe navis longae enatam*; cf. Iul. Obs. 47. It is not strange, therefore, that Claud. de rap. Pros. 3, 76, should make Proserpina see in her ill-omened dreams a laurel tree, *imo stipite caesam/ . . . et incomptos foedari pulvere ramos/ quaesivitque nefas*. Dryades dixere gementes/Tartarea Furias debellavisse bipenni; an interesting statement in view of what was said above.

More convincing evidence for the connection of laurel with the spirits of the underworld is afforded by its relation to the oracle at Delphi. We know that there was there, in very early times, an oracle of the chthonic Gaia;¹ that it was a spot which was thought of as the entrance to the lower world, whence flowed the spring Cassotis, which inspired "the women with the spirit of prophecy".² Beside the oracular cavern, before Apollo took possession of it, grew a laurel tree,³ and the close connection between this tree and the underworld is shown both by the fact that Daphnis (= Daphne) was appointed by Gaia the first priestess of her oracle,⁴ and by the legend of Daphne, who was the daughter of Gaia.⁵ Perhaps this laurel was thought of as an arbor locuta;⁶ that the spirits were supposed to enter it is shown by the belief that the tree, after Apollo had become god of the oracle, denoted his presence by the trembling of its boughs: Aristoph. Plut. 213, *ἔχω τιν' ἀγαθὴν ἐλπίδ' ἐξ ὧν εἰπέ μοι/ὁ Φοῖβος αὐτὸς Πυθικὴν σείσας δάφνην*; cf. Call. hm. Ap. 1; Verg. Aen. 3, 90 *tremere omnia visa repente/limina laurusque dei*; ib. 5, 154;

¹ Cf. Alc. fr. 3; Aesch. Eum. 1 sq.; Paus. 10, 5, 5 sq.; cf. Boettich. Baumk. 338 sq. Rohde, Psy. II, 58 sq.; Gruppe, Gr. Myth., p. 101, n. 6.

² Paus. 10, 24, 7; Gruppe, l. l.

³ Eurip. Iph. T. 1245 sq.; Pl. 15, 134, speaks of Delphi as 'lauriferam tellurem'; cf. Eur. Ion, 76; cf. h. Hom. Ap. 393.

⁴ Paus. 10, 5, 5.

⁵ Cf. Gruppe, l. l. Roscher's Lex. s. v.

⁶ Pl. 17, 243. This is true of the oak, myrtle, and cypress, classed with laurel by Pythagoras in the passage quoted above. Servius, commenting on Verg. Aen. 3, 359, *interpretes divom, qui nomina Phoebi/qui tripodas, Clarii lauros, qui sidera sentis*, remarks: *Vergilius tria genera divinationum complexus est: per lauros geomantis, per sidera pyromantis, per praeceptes aeromantis*; cf. Isid. Orig. 8, 9, 13.

Ov. M. 15, 634; Sen. Oed. 233. The Schol. on Aristoph., l. 1., and Tryph. 365-6, tell us that the priestess shook the tree when delivering her prophecies. Gaia's priestess, too, continued to deliver Apollo's oracles, and regularly chewed¹ laurel and fumigated² herself with it before giving her responses. What aim these performances had it is difficult to say. Judging from similar practises common among savage peoples,³ we should be inclined to conclude that laurel possessed intoxicating properties, and "contributed to throw the priestess in the delirium which the ancients regarded as a sign of inspiration".⁴ There are, however, but few passages in ancient literature which support this interpretation: Tibul. 2, 5, 63, where the Sibyl says, *vera cano: sic usque sacras innoxia lauros vascar*, where *innoxia* may refer to the danger of the continued use of a plant which caused frenzy, although it is possible to interpret it: 'may the furor divinus, the continued presence of the god in me, do me no harm'; Mart. 5, 4: *Foetere multo Myrtale solet vino/sed fallat ut nos, folia devorat lauri/merumque cauta fronde, non aqua miscet./hanc tu rubentem prominentibus venis/quotiens venire, Paule, videris contra,/dicas licebit 'Myrtale bibit laurum';* the last words seem to imply that laurel, without the wine, would produce the same effects as wine, but the meaning may be that laurel prevents intoxication; this is supported by the statement of Pliny 17, 239, that *laurus laedit vitem*, cf. Theoph. h. pl. 5, 20, just as cabbage, of which the same statement is made,⁵ was thought to prevent intoxication;⁶ lastly, the Schol. on Hes. Theog. 30, commenting on the words *καὶ μοι σκήπτρον ἔδον δάφνης*

¹ Cf. Soph. fr. 811 (N); Luc. Bis. Acc. 1; Hym. Mag. in Abel Orph., p. 288; Himer. Or. 28; cf. Luc. Diss. cum Hes. 8.

² Plut. de EI ap. Delph. 2; de Pyth. Or. 6; cf. Hom. hy. 2, 215.

³ Cf. Tylor, Prim. Cult. 2, 416.

⁴ So Frazer in his note on Paus. 10, 5, 5, suggests. Rabelais' Sibyl of Panzoust burned dry laurel leaves in her divination; Rabel. 3, ch. 17. As the laurel did not crackle it is interpreted as a bad omen. It may be noted that laurel was apparently burned in honor of the gods, cf. Philostr. Vit. Soph. 2, 25, 5: *τὸ δὲ ἄρωμα τοῦτο οὕτω τι σπάνιον καθ' ἡμᾶς νῦν, ὥς ψαιστὸν καὶ δάφνης φύλλα τοῖς θεοῖς θυμιάσθαι*. According to Alciaphr. 3, 16, it was offered to them: *ἔφερες ἂν τοῖς θεοῖς κίττον καὶ δάφνας*.

⁵ Cf. Theoph. h. pl. 4, 16, 6; Pl. 17, 239. The antipathy of the vine to the cabbage is explained aetiologically by the story of Dionysus and Lycurgus, Geop. 12, 17, 7.

⁶ Cf. Aristot. Prob. 3, p. 873 A 37; Varro, de R. R. 1, 2, 28.

ἐριθηλέος ὄζον remarks, *παρόσον ἢ δάφνη ἐνεργεῖ πρὸς τοὺς ἐνθουσιασμούς*, but this still leaves us the question 'how'; are the words to be taken in a literal or figurative sense? On the other hand, Pliny, even where he writes of plants used to produce visions,¹ makes no reference to any intoxicating property of laurel nor do any of the writers on medicine. It was used, however, to make wine: Dios. 5, 45; Pl. 14, 112, *bacas aut lignum recens musto decoquant*; although the laurel may simply have given flavor, as its leaves were commonly used to season cakes; cf. Cato, de Ag. Cul. 121: *mustaceos sic facito, . . . de virga lauri deradito eodem addito et ubi definxeris lauri folia subtus addito cum coques*; cf. Pl. 15, 127; and for similar statements, Athen. 4, p. 140 D-E; Hesych. s. v. *κάμματα*; cf., too, the proverb, *laureolam in mustaceo quaerere*.²

Another explanation, moreover, is possible. It is evident that both the chewing of the laurel and the fumigation with the smoke from it had the same purpose, and when we remember that the Superstitious Man chewed laurel to keep off evil spirits,³ that the Romans burned it during the Parilia for the same reason,⁴ that laurel leaves, too, when burned, *pestilentiae contagia prohibent*,⁵ it may be that this idea underlay the practices of the Pythian priestess;⁶ expulsion is a more natural idea to a primitive man than inspiration,⁷ but both are necessary, and it is hard to distinguish them. Surely the need of protection against spirits is evident from the nature of the cave as an entrance to the lower world, and, what is more important, from the fact that directly beneath the omphalos was the grave of the Python.⁸ This would explain, too, why those who went to consult the oracle carried laurel branches or wore laurel crowns,⁹ and why the tripod was crowned

¹ 24, 160.

² Cic. ad Att. 5, 20, 4; cf. Otto, Spr., p. 236.

³ Theoph. Ch. 16; cf., above, p. 293. ⁴ Ov. F. 4, 741; cf., above, p. 297.

⁵ Pl. 23, 157.

⁶ So Gruppe, l. 1., 890, n. 3; Harrison, l. 1., 39; Boet. Baumk. 349, says that the chewing of the laurel has lustral signification.

⁷ Thus Rohde, Psy. 2, 58, n. 1, seems to explain it: In dem heiligen Gewächse steckt die vis divina; man schlingt sie durch Kauen in sich selbst hinein.

⁸ Varro, de L. L. 7, 17; other ref. in Rohde, I, 132, n. 2; Gruppe, 1433, n. 9; 928, n. 1.

⁹ Eur. Ion, 420; Hec. 458; Aristoph. Pax, 1044; Livy, 23, 11, 5; Plut. Arist. 20, 4. So when the Sibylline Books were opened, laurel was in evidence; cf. Vopis. Vit. Aurel. 20; cf. Stat. Silv. 4, 3, 118.

with it.¹ Our sources, it is true, do not tell us whether these practices were necessary before the coming of Apollo or not; the crowning of the tripod is mentioned only in connection with the god, but we may, it seems to me, safely conclude that they were.

The thing to be emphasized, in any event, is that laurel should stand in such close relationship with the spirits of the underworld. Not only was the oracle at Delphi an earth-oracle, which owed its power to such spirits, but, like similar oracles, the responses were not due, in the most ancient times, to a furor divinus, as they were later thought to be, but to dreams,² and dreams dwell beneath the earth.³ Hence laurel, when placed under a sleeper's head, caused true dreams.⁴ It is significant, too, that laurel was sacred to Asclepius,⁵ and brought into relation with Amphiaraus,⁶ both of whom foretold the future by means of dreams,⁷ and whose oracles owed their existence to the same ideas as the oracle of Python.⁸ It was connected, also, with Castor and Pollux, who had a grove of laurel trees near Pharae,⁹ and who may belong to the same circle;¹⁰ with Hercules,¹¹ too, who, however, seems to have become too much of an Olympian to have been the inspiring spirit of an earth-oracle as did the other heroes. We should put here, I think, the words of Aeschylus.

¹ Cf. Aristoph. *Plut.* 39; Eur. *Ion*, 522; 1310; Lucr. 1, 739; Stat. *Theb.* 7, 707. According to Palaeph. de *Incred.* 50, 4, there was no tripod, throughout Boeotia, without its laurel; ὁ τρίπους οὐκ ἄνευ τῆς δάφνης ἰδρῶσθαι . . . ἐπὶ τοῦ χάσματος.

² Eur. *Iph. T.* 1259 sq.; Rohde, 2, 58; Harrison, 344; Gruppe, 931.

³ Gruppe, 934 sq.

⁴ Fulgent. 1, 14; Ps.-Galen. *περὶ ἐντορίστων*, 2, 27, 3. So in the magic papyri; cf. Pap. Anast. 370 (Wess.) where laurel is used as a means to procuring an oracular response in a dream; cf. 467; in Pap. CXXI (Brit. Mus.) 602, in a similar spell ascribed to Pythagoras and Democritus. In Rabelais 3, ch. 13, Panurge asks Pantagruel, who has advised him to try the efficacy of dreams in foretelling the future, whether it were not expedient to put a "branch or two of the curious laurel betwixt the quilt and bolster of my bed?"

⁵ Hence its name ἀσκληπιᾶς, Hesych. s. v.; cf. E. M. 154, 48.

⁶ A laurel tree sprang from his lance, *Plut. par. min.* 6; he also wore a laurel crown, *Philostr. Imag.* 1, 27.

⁷ Cf. Rohde, *Psy.* 1, 113; 141.

⁸ Gruppe, 934 sq.; Harrison, 341 sq.

⁹ Paus. 7, 22, 5.

¹⁰ Gruppe, 1, 1.

¹¹ *Macr.* 3, 12, 1: cum ad aram maximam sola lauro capita et alia fronde non vinciant; *Serv. ad Aen.* 8, 276; cf. *Marq.-Momm. R. Staatsv.* 3, 186; cf. the story of Cacus, above, p. 288.

Supp. 704: *θεοὺς δ' οἱ γαῖαν ἔχουσιν ἀεὶ/τίοιεν ἐγχωρίους πατρώας/δαφνηφόροισι βουθύτοισι τιμαῖς*, since, in a law of Draco, ap. Porphy. de abs. 4, concerning such ceremonies, *ἥρωες* are included.¹

Nor is it strange, in view of these facts, that laurel was sacred to Dionysius,² for he, too, had a share in the oracle at Delphi³ which may likewise have been a dream oracle.⁴ And his grave was there in the temple of Apollo.⁵ How necessary, indeed, to an oracle was the grave of him who inspired it, whether god or demon, is shown by the statement of Pythagoras, Porphy. Vit. Py. 16, that Apollo was buried at Delphi after he had been slain by the Python. The use of laurel, too, in chthonic rites seems never to have entirely died out, for we read in an inscription concerning the Mysteries of Demeter and Ceres at Andania (Dittenb. Syll. 2, p. 464), *ὅταν δὲ οἱ ἱεροὶ παραγγέλωντι, τὰ μὲν στλεγγίδα ἀποθίσθωσαν, στεφανούσθωσαν δὲ πάντες δάφναι*.

Apollo, however, became sole lord at Delphi, and the ancient chthonic oracle with its sacred tree⁶ passed into the possession of the god of light. The laurel was made sacred to him,⁷ and we

¹ For its relation to Mars, to whom, also, it was sacred, Lyd. de men. 4, 4; cf. above, p. 293; Roscher, Lex. 2427; Fowler, Rom. Fest. 36. It may be noted that Mars was also an oracle god; Roscher, l. l., 2432; Laurel was also connected with Hermes, Ael. v. h. 2, 41; and Hermes was, above all "Sender of dreams"; cf. Hom. h. 3, 14; Roscher, Herm. d. Windg. 64 sq.

² Cf. Hom. h. 26, 9: *κισσῷ καὶ δάφνῃ πεπνυκασμένος*. In Phigalia, his image was adorned with laurel leaves, Paus. 8, 30, 6; cf. Kaibel, Nachr. v. der Königl. Gesells. d. Wissens. zu Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. 1901, 510; Tertul. de cor. mil. 12: *corona . . . laurea ista Apollini vel Libero sacra est*; in ib. 7, he tells us that in this crown *ex Indis triumphavit, etiam vulgus agnoscit cum dies in illum sollemnes Magnam appellat Coronam*; cf. Lenormant, Gaz. Arch. 2 (1876), 103.

³ Lucan, Phar. 5, 73; Plut. de EI apud Del. 9; cf. Rohde, 2, 54 sq.; Thraemer, Roscher's Lex. 1033.

⁴ Cf. Gruppe, 1415, n. 2; Thraemer, l. l.; otherwise, Rohde, 2, 59.

⁵ Philoch. F. H. G. 1, 22-3; Rohde, 1, 132, n. 2; Thraemer, l. l.

⁶ The belief that laurel possessed a fiery nature—cf. above,—may have contributed to bring about the close relation between this tree and Apollo, but the evidence shows, I think, that this was not the original idea, on which the relationship was based. This is, however, the explanation of Murr, Pflanzenw. d. My. 92 sq.; cf. Geop. 11, 2; Lyd. de men. 4, 4. He likewise derives the various uses of laurel from the various functions of the god.

⁷ It is unnecessary to cite further evidence on this point. References are particularly numerous in the Latin poets; cf. Verg. Ecl. 2, 54; 3, 63; Hor. Od. 4, 2, 9; Ov. M. 1, 558; Rem. Am. 75; Mart. 8, 82, 7; 9, 28, 9. So in inscriptions; cf. Ditt. Syll. 1, p. 349.

read that he was born under a laurel tree; Serv. ad Aen. 3, 91; cf. Eur. Hec. 456 sq.; his first temple at Delphi was made of laurel wood, Paus. 10, 5, 9; cf. Philostr. Vit. Apoll. 6, 10, 34; Strabo, 9, 3, 9; he was represented as crowned with laurel,¹ Tibull. 2, 5, 5; Ov. M. 1, 565; Claud. Laus Herc. 7 sq.; so his priests, Verg. Aen. 3, 81; Eur. Ion, 78; Schol. Arist. Pax 1044; Eust. ad Il. 1, 14; apparently, too, laurel was used as an offering to Apollo, Plaut. Merc. 675, aliquid cedo/qui hanc vicini nostri aram augeam./da sane hanc virgam lauri, where the altar referred to seems to be that of Apollo; cf. Bacc. 172, saluto te vicene Apollo;² so in the lists of offerings found in his temples, we find δάφνης στεφάνωι; cf. Ditt. Syll. 1, p. 461; 2, 321; especially Ins. 588; at the Pythian games the victor received a laurel crown,³ Paus. 10, 7, 8; 8, 48, 2; Pl. 15, 127; Dion Cass. 63, 9; and in Rome the spectators at the Ludi Apollinares wore laurel crowns, Fest., p. 23; Livy 25, 12, 15; Macr. 1, 17, 29; the god was called δαφνηφόρος,⁴ Plut. Them. 15, 2; Athen. 10, 424; Anacr. 13, 6; Paus. 9, 10, 4 with Frazer's note; δαφναῖος, Anth. Pal. 9, 477; Philostr. Vit. A. 1, 16; Nonn. D. 38, 60; δαφνογηθής, Anth. Pal. 9, 525; δαφνόκυμος, ib. 9, 505, 11; Opp. Cyn. 1, 365; δαφνο-πώλης, Hesych. s. v.; we read of songs called δαφνηφορικά, Poll. 4, 53; Suid. s. v. Πίνδαρος; according to Anton. Liber. 1, Hermocharēs grasped a laurel when he swore an oath by Apollo; in a passage in Euseb. Praep. Evang. 5, 9, 8, Apollo, in order to free himself from the magic bands which keep him on earth bids the

¹ For the laurel crown in art, cf. Roscher, Apol. u. Mars, 90, rem. 207; Gruppe, 1259 sq.

² Cf. the words of Hermes in Aristoph. Plut. 1113, ἀφ' οὗ γὰρ ἤρξατ' ἐξ ἀρχῆς βλέπειν/ὁ Πλούτος οὐδεὶς οὐ λιβανωτόν, οὐ δάφνην,/οὐ ψαιστόν, οὐχ ἱερεῖον, οὐκ ἄλλ' οὐδ' ἐν/ῆμιν ἐτι θύει τοῖς θεοῖς; cf. Pl. 16, 137; Alciph. 3, 16. So the altars of Apollo were also decorated with laurel, as we gather from ib. Thes. 489, εἰτ' ἐρείδομαι/παρὰ τὸν Ἀγνῖα κίβδ' ἐχομένη τῆς δάφνης. According to Herod. 4, 15 laurel trees grew around the statues of Apollo and Aristaeas. According to Athen. 13, 605 C the laurel tree was of bronze.

³ So in the funeral games described by Verg. Aen. 5, 246; 539. It is a significant fact that some ancient writers derive the origin of the four great Greek games from funeral games; cf. Frazer's note on Paus. 1, 44, 8. May not this, in view of what has been said of the laurel above, aid us to explain why all the crowns, which were given as prizes at these games, were made of powerful prophylactic plants?

⁴ Cf. Latin lauriger, Ov. A. A. 3, 389; lauripotens, Mart. Capel. 1, 24; cf. 1, 20.

sacred crown to be taken from him, the laurel branch removed from his hand: *χειρὸς δεξιτερῆς δάφνης κλάδον ἄρατε χειροί*, etc. In the magic papyri, laurel is spoken of as *δάφνημαντοσύνης ἱερὸν φυτὸν Ἀπόλλωνος*, cf. Pap. Anast. 5 (XLVII, Brit. Mus.) 6; 40-1; Berl. Pap. (Parthey), II, 81; in Leid. Pap. 395 (W in Leemans), 13, 16-18, the performer of a charm is directed to hold a statue of Apollo, cut from a root of laurel; so in 15, 14-15; in Berl. Pap. II, 21, we read, *κλάδους δάφνης ἔχων ἐν χειρσίν . . . λέγε τὴν ὑποκειμένην ἐπὶ κλησίν*; cf. I, 280, in an *Ἀπολλωνιακὴ ἐπὶ κλησις*: *τὸ φυλακτήριον ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ (χειρί), τουτέστιν τὸν κλῶνα τῆς δάφνης*; cf. 338; in the same charm, 264 sq. the magic characters are written on seven laurel leaves; cf. II, 11; 28 sq.; Pap. Par. (Wess.) 2207; Pap. Lugd. W (ed. Dieterich, Abraxas), p. 24, 23.

From this connection with the god of inspiration, whether prophetic or poetic, laurel became the symbol of both prophecy¹ and poetry; Geop. II, 3, *μαντικῆς σύμβολον ἐγένετο τὸ φυτόν*; cf. II, 5; Cedren. I, p. 532; Lyd. de men. 4, 4; Eust. ad Hom. II. I, 14; Claud. de Rapt. Pros. 2, 109, writes *venturi praescia laurus*; de Con. Stil. 3, 59, *fatidicas . . . laurus*. Hence it was borne by seers and bards; cf. Sen. de Vit. Beat. 26, 8, *cum aliquis genibus per viam repens ululat laurumque linteatus senex et medio lucernam die praeferens*; with this passage should be compared the strikingly similar one in Apul. Met. XI. 10, describing the procession in honor of Isis,² where one of the "antistites sacrorum", *auream vannum laureis congestam ramulis . . . ferebat*; cf. Hesych. s. v. *ἰθυντήριον*; so Mopsus, the seer, was distinguished by laurel, Valer. Fl. I, 209; 386; 3, 434; 4, 547; and other prophets, Sen. Ag. 609; Stat. Th. 4, 598; I, 42; 7, 784; Ov. A. A. 2, 401; cf. ib. M. 15, 591; more frequently of bards: Ov. A. A. 2, 495, *sacris induta capillis/laurus erat*: *vates ille videndus adit*; cf. Ep. ex Pon. 2, 5, 67; Verg. Ecl. 8, 13; Hor. Od. 3, 30, 15; 3, 4, 19; 4, 2, 9; Mart. 12, 3, 11; Claud. de Con. Stil. 3, praef. 20. So Hesiod sang with

¹ We must remember, however, its ancient association with the Pythian oracle. Owing to this and to its connection with Apollo, such expressions as "Delphica laurus" or simply "laurus" = 'prophecy'; cf. Sen. Oed. 16; Stat. Theb. 7, 707; 8, 203.

² Ovid, Am. 2, 13, 18 also refers to the use of laurel in connection with Isis: *saepe tibi (sc. Isi) sedit certis operata diebus, qua tingit laurus Gallica turba tuas*. For statues of Men bearing laurel, cf. Roscher, Lex. s. v. 2695; 2745.

a laurel wand in his hand,¹ Paus. 9, 30, 3; cf. Hes. Theog. 30. Hence, poets gain inspiration by chewing laurel, Juv. 7, 19, nectit quicumque canoris/eloquium vocale modis laurumque momordit; Lycoph. 6 calls a bard *δαφνηφάγος*; cf. Call. Hym. Del. 94, ἀλλ' ἔμπης ἐρέω τι τορώτερον ἢ ἀπὸ δάφνης, Colum. de Cul. Hor. 216; Stat. Achil. 1, 509, calls the divine inspiration of Apollo 'laurigeros ignes'.²

It is a noteworthy fact that laurel, in spite of its connection with Apollo, the god of healing, is not mentioned as a medicinal plant by Hippocrates or Theophrastus, Dioscorides being the first to describe it as such.³ Its wide-spread use, therefore, as a folk remedy, as shown by the importance given to it by later writers on medicine, must rest primarily upon the belief in its power over demons, although its relation to Apollo must have had great influence. The employment of laurel in purificatory rites in time of pestilence,—cf. above,—must have been due to the former idea, which is illustrated too, by a statement in Herodian. 1, 12, that during a pestilence in Rome *Κόμμοδος . . . εἰς τὴν Λαύρεντον ἀνεχώρησεν* 'ἐνψυχέστερον γὰρ ὂν τὸ χωρίον καὶ μεγίστοις κατάσκιον δαφνηφόροις ἄλσεσιν . . . σωτήριον εἶναι ἐδόκει καὶ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀέρος φθορὰν ἀντέχειν ἐλέγγο εὐωδία τε τῆς τῶν δαφνῶν ἀποφορᾶς καὶ τῇ τῶν δένδρων ἡδεΐα σκιᾷ'. And Pl. 23, 157, says: *laurus Delphicae folia trita olfactaque subinde pestilentiae contagia prohibent: tanto magis si et urantur*. The naive idea underlying such statements is well illustrated by the words of Lyd. de men. 4, 4: *οὐδὲ γὰρ ἱερὰ νόσος ἢ δαίμων βαρὺς ἐνοχλήσει τῷ τόπῳ ἐν ᾧ δάφνη ἐστίν*; cf. Geop. 11, 2, 7. Hence, Nicand. Ther. 943, gives *δάφνης σπερμείον* as one of the ingredients of a mixture *πάσῃσιν ἀλεξητήριον αἵταις*; and Pl. 23, 154, says of it: *perunctos eo fugiunt venenata omnia*; . . . *baeae cum vino serpentibus et scorpionibus et araneis resistunt*; similar statements are made by Nican. Ther. 574; Cass. Fel. 67; Theod. Pris. Eup. F. 24, 74. We also read in Pl. 8, 101, *corvus occiso chamaeleone qui etiam victori nocet, lauro infectum virus exstinguit*. According to Geop. 11, 2, 5, *ὑγείας ἐστὶ ἐργαστική*; cf. Lyd. de men. 4, 4; and in another place, 2, 7, 3, we are

¹ Cf. Panofka, Arch. Zeit. 8 (1856), p. 254. On this custom, cf. Schol. Aristoph. Nub. 1367; Hesych. s. v. *αἰσακος*; Et. M. 38, 48.

² Sabinus, Ep. 1, 126, speaking of some poet, says: *sic cecinit laurus ille monere suas*.

³ Cf. Koch, Bäume u. Sträucher des alten Griechenl., p. 90.

told that when laurel is soaked in water it makes it healthy. Artemid. On. 4, 57, informs us that for sick people to dream of the olive, signifies death, of the laurel, life, and he explains by adding that the dead were laid out on olive leaves, never on laurel.¹ Interesting, in view of the supposed fiery nature of laurel,—cf. above,—is its use for fever: Diosc. 1, 106; Pl. 23, 156; Cass. Fel. 55. It is unnecessary to give in detail the many diseases for which it was employed as a cure; for them, cf. Dios., l. 1, Pl. 23, 152 sq.; Galen. de Fac. Simp. Med. 6, 169. It is to be noted that laurel is seldom recommended for violent convulsive diseases,² as we should have expected on the principle of *similia similibus*, if the chewing of laurel leaves by the Pythian priestess is to be explained by its intoxicating properties. It was used, however, to cure mad animals,³ Veget. 5, 42, 2; cf. Pelag. 407, and Theod. Pris. Log. 3, 15, prescribes it for people who are afflicted with lethargy.⁴

¹ This explanation can hardly go to the root of the matter, since the use of the olive, in such a case, must rest upon a belief in the prophylactic powers of the olive,—powers which, as we have seen, laurel possessed to a high degree. Servius seems to reverse the matter in his note on the purificatory use of the olive in funeral rites, Verg. Aen. 6, 230; cf. above, p. 289; he says of 'felicitis olivae', arboris festae, sed moris fuerat ut de lauro fieret. He then quotes Donatus to the effect that Vergil made the change on account of Augustus, because of the fact that a laurel tree sprang up on the day of his birth, the branches of which furnished crowns for triumphators; therefore 'noluit laurum dicere ad officium lugebre pertinere;' cf. Pliny cited above p. 297. The explanation of such conflicting statements may lie in the fact that the laurel, owing to its connection with Apollo, lost the chthonic associations which it undoubtedly once possessed. Upon these words of Servius Boetticher, Baumk. 352, bases his statement: 'bei Todtenweißen ist der Lorbeer von den Alten überall ausgeschlossen.'

² In none of the authors quoted. But in the Ms. on Acute and Chronic Diseases, ed. Fuchs, Rh. Mus. 58 (1903) pp. 67 sq. we find laurel wine is mentioned among the *σπασμῶν θεραπεία*, p. 92, l. 9; and also prescribed for convulsions in cases of hydrophobia, p. 106, l. 9. In both instances, however, the body of the patient is to be rubbed with the wine.

³ It may be noted that laurel was thought to be deadly poison to the goose, Ael. N. An. 5, 29. So the so-called rhododaphne was said to be poisonous to all animals, Pl. 6, 20, 33; Luc. Asinus, 17; Apul. M. 4, 2. We find laurel often recommended for sick beasts; Cato, 70, 1; Colum. 6, 7, 3; 13, 3; Veget. 1, 12, 4; 5, 58, 2; Pelag. 205; 245; so Pl. 10, 157, advises a 'cubitus in fumo . . . ex lauro' for chickens suffering from pituita.

⁴ So in the Ms. referred to, Fuchs p. 76, l. 14.

Some interesting statements in regard to its use are made by Marc. Emp. Cf. 1, 67, a cure for headache: ¹ duo folia lauri circumcisa rotundabis resinaque terebinthina glutinabis et utrisque temporibus adfiges, nisi reddita sanitate non decident. 26, 94: calculosis expertus adfirmat incredibiliter succurri remedio tali, si hircum, melius si agrestem, melius si anniculum et si mense Augusto claudas loco sicco per triduum, ut ei solas laurus edendas subministres et aquae nihil accipiat; ad postremum tertio die, id est aut Iovis aut Solis, occidas. Melius autem erit si castus purusque fuerit et qui occidit et qui accipiet remedium. The goat's blood is then burned to ashes in a clay vase which is afterward pounded into dust. In other cases the method amounts to simple magic, as 16, 25, where for a cough three grains of pepper and three laurel berries are to be taken first, then five, seven, nine, and then in reversed order down to three again; cf. 26, 30.

In magic, indeed, laurel must always have played an important rôle. Some examples of its use have been given above. Equally interesting, and showing more clearly the close connection between laurel and the spirits of the underworld, is a passage in Heliod. 6, 14; the Egyptian witch, in her magic rites to bring her son to life, makes a paste of dough, works it into the likeness of a man, and, after crowning it with laurel and fennel, throws it into the ditch into which she had previously poured an offering of honey, milk, and wine. She then cuts her arm with a sword, dips a branch of laurel in the blood, and sprinkles it over the fire; owing to the power of such spells the dead returned to life. In ib. 4, 5, when Calasiris pretends to free Charicles from the effects of the 'evil-eye' with a branch of laurel, he strokes the maiden several times from head to foot. Hippolytus, Refut. om. Haer. 4, 28, describes a magic incantation, when all who are present hold laurel branches and shake them. In Apul. M. 3, 23, Fotis tells Lucius, when he expresses a fear that, after he has turned himself into a bubo he may not be able to regain his proper form, 'tanta res procuretur herbulis: anethi modicum cum lauri foliis immistum rore fontano datur lavacrum et poculum'. In a magic performance described by Am. Marcel. 29, 1, 29, the tripod is made of laurel wood. Medea as a witch, appears in art with twigs of laurel; ² and according to

¹ Cf. Pl., l. 1., Dios., l. 1., Scrib. Larg. 3-5; Fuchs, l. 1., p. 84, l. 12.

² Cf. Baum. Denkm. 2, 903; Jahn, Rh. Mus. 6, 296; Roscher's Lex. 2501.

Orph. Arg. 916, laurel was one of the trees which grew in the garden of Hecate.¹ In Pap. Par. (Wess.) 2582, laurel is part of the offering in a *Διαβολή πρὸς Σελήνην*; cf. 2648; in Ber. Pap. II, 35, it is one of the ingredients of a magic ink; and the following charm to catch a thief occurs in Pap. Anast. 203 sq.: *ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος ἐπὶ τοῦ καθαρμοῦ· λαβὼν ἄγγος καλλάινον βάλε ὕδωρ καὶ ζυῖρναν καὶ κυνοκέφαλον βύτ καὶ ἐμβρέχων κλάδον δάφνης ἓνα ἕκαστον ἀποκαθαίρων ὧ τρίποδα ἐπίθες, κτέ.*

The above citations, which I have endeavored, although I cannot hope to have fully succeeded, to make exhaustive in regard to all the important uses of laurel, support, it seems to me, the following conclusions which were derived from a study of numerous folk-lore plants: 1. Only the plants which are indigenous² to Greece or Italy, or which were, at least, in use there in prehistoric ages, were used in native religious rites. 2. These rites are connected with spirit worship; the plant was either employed directly as an offering to the souls of the dead, was used in purificatory rites which generally imply the presence of such souls, or was sacred to chthonic powers. 3. A corollary of the second, the plant was endowed with prophylactic powers; it could keep off spirits as such, or in the form of snakes and other noxious animals. It was endowed, also, with various magical properties. 4. It was employed in medicine, not in accordance with any medicinal quality which it may possess but in a manner corresponding to the supposed demonic nature of disease.

¹ Contrast with this Vergil's lines, Aen. 6, 656, in his description of the 'sedes beatae,' *conspicit . . . alios . . . canentes inter odoratum lauri nemus*. These two passages well illustrate the two-fold tradition in regard to laurel, the one resting upon its ancient association with the spirit world, the other upon its connection with Apollo and all the symbolism which sprang from such connection.

² It is pretty well agreed that the laurel is indigenous to Greece; cf. Lenz, *Botan. d. Gr. u. Röm.* 450 sq.; Koch, l. l.; Murr, l. l., 92 sq. The opinion of Hehn, *Kulturpfl. u. Haust.* 197 sq. that it came into Europe from Asia Minor, perhaps in the train "einer lustrierenden Religion" is surely not justified by the evidence. The question in regard to Italy is not as clear, and Hehn thinks that it was introduced there with the Apollo-cult. Such a theory, however, makes it difficult to account for the presence of laurel in the Mars-cult, in some of the most primitive of Roman religious rites; cf. Roscher, *Lex. s. v. Mars* 1247; and Preller-Jordan, *Röm. My.* 302, n. 2. It may, therefore, be native to Italy, also, as some authorities claim; cf. Pickering, *Chron. Hist. of Plants*, s. v. 'Laurel'; Schimper, *Pflanzen-Geogr.* 551.

It is impossible, of course, to determine definitely to what folk-philosophy laurel originally owed its connection with the spirit-world. We seem to be carried back to a time when the tree was a fetish,¹ and Gruppe² may be right in maintaining that this developed out of a more primitive fire worship. With the belief that a demon dwelt in a tree to start from, we can understand how the various ideas concerning laurel could have developed.

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¹ For evidences of the tree-fetish in Greece, cf. Gruppe, pp. 779 sq.

² *Ib.*, p. 784.